Safe Room Initiative Pays Off for Oklahoma Resident

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Cleveland County, Oklahoma

Moore, OK - Charles Atchley and his wife escaped unscathed after the 1999 Oklahoma tornado, but decided not to take their good fortune lightly. They took advantage of a FEMA tornado initiative ($2,000 rebate) and installed a below-ground safe room.

During the tornado of May 8, 2003, Atchley and his three grandchildren took shelter in his safe room. His wife was at work at the time of the storm. He quickly took shelter after hearing the warning siren. When the storm passed, his family left the shelter safe and sound. Once again, this family was lucky and had no damage to their home, but Atchley said the storm shelter gives him "peace of mind" he wouldn't trade.

The shelter unit is neatly recessed into the ground and only the door can be detected nestled within the manicured landscape of the backyard. Atchley has stocked his safe room with the necessary supplies for survival and even included a black-and-white TV that runs on batteries. "I even get reception in the storm shelter," he boasted.

The below-ground shelter is a prime example that shelters don't have to be eyesores because the only trace visible on this unit is the access and two wind-driven turbines for air circulation.

The City of Moore has established a shelter registration program. Property owners with shelters register with the fire and police departments so their shelter can be checked following a tornado in the event debris has fallen on the ground-level doors. Having a noisemaker such as a whistle in the shelter supplies is recommended.

“You never know when you have to make a little noise to let emergency personnel know you’re safe and sound in your shelter,” states Atchley.

Activity/Project Location	
Geographical Area:	**Single County in a State**
FEMA Region:	**Region VI**
State:	**Oklahoma**
County:	**Cleveland County**
City/Community:	**Moore**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector:	**Private**
Hazard Type:	**Tornado**
Activity/Project Type:	**Safe Rooms/Community Shelters**
Structure Type:	**Safe Room/Community Shelter**
Activity/Project Start Date:	**10/1999**
Activity/Project End Date:	**10/2000**
Funding Source:	**Other FEMA funds/ US Department of Homeland Security**
Funding Recipient:	**Property Owner - Residential**
Funding Recipient Name:	**Homeowner**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost:	**Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal Disaster?	**Unknown**
Value Tested By Disaster?	**Yes**
Tested By Federal Disaster #:	**No Federal Disaster specified**
Year First Tested:	**2003**
Repetitive Loss Property?	**Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1:	**http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_saferoom.shtm**
Reference URL 2:	**http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/fema431.shtm**

Main Points

- Homeowner took advantage of a FEMA tornado initiative ($2,000 rebate) and installed a belowground safe room.
- During the tornado of May 8, 2003, the homeowner and his three grandchildren took shelter in his safe room. He quickly took shelter after hearing the warning siren. When the storm passed, his family left the shelter safe and sound.
- The belowground shelter is a prime example that shelters don't have to be eyesores, since the only trace visible on this unit is the access and two wind-driven turbines for air circulation.